DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 341 791 CE 060 255

AUTHOR Ruhland, Sheila K.
TITLE The Implementation of Program Evaluation Recommendations in Wisconsin Technical Colleges.
PUB DATE 10 Dec 91
NOTE 26p.; Paper presented at the American Vocational Association Convention (Los Angeles, CA, December 10, 1991).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Associate Degrees; Change Strategies; *Evaluation Utilization; Marketing; Orientation; *Program Evaluation; *Program Implementation; Resistance to Change; *Technical Institutes; Two Year Colleges
IDENTIFIERS *Wisconsin

ABSTRACT

Implementation of program evaluation recommendations should persuade people that the rewards of an evaluation outweigh the reasons for resistance. A study was undertaken with the following purposes: identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of program evaluation; determine the proportion of recommendations made in each of the nine major areas of the evaluation used for Wisconsin two-year technical college programs; and identify which areas had recommendations implemented most and least frequently. Nine evaluation areas were studied: general issues; curriculum content; instruction; faculty; counseling and support services; student organizations; advisory committee; facilities, equipment, and resources; and other. Study population consisted of 16 district directors, instructional services deans, curriculum coordinators, department deans, and instructors from 4 Wisconsin technical colleges. The program selected for study was the Associate Degree in Marketing. Program evaluation documents and interviews were used to obtain data. Implementation of recommendations was found to occur in three stages: orientation, initiation, and integration. Several implications were outlined: (1) a model should identify the stages of implementation; (2) educators need to realize that recommendations identified at the early stages are moving toward implementation; and (3) there are facilitators and barriers that affect implementation. (12 references) (NLA)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED341791

# THE IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAM EVALUATION RECOMMENDATIONS IN WISCONSIN TECHNICAL COLLEGES

Sheila K. Ruhland
Assistant Professor
University of Missouri-Columbia
Columbia, Missouri

Presented at
American Vocational Association
AVERA Research Program
December 10, 1991

Department of Practical Arts and Vocational Education
Marketing Education
University of Missouri-Columbia
202 London Hall
Columbia, Missouri 65211
(314) 882-6058

CE060255

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

S K Ruhland

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# The Implementation of Program Evaluation Recommendations in Wisconsin Technical Colleges

## Introduction

Program evaluation has emerged as one of the most prominent issues in higher education today (Conrad & Wilson, 1985). The manner in which a program evaluation is carried out will determine its overall usefulness as a tool for educational improvement (Cook, 1988). A good evaluation identifies recommendations that will contribute to program planning and improvement. Often there is no commitment and little authority on the part of educators to implement these recommendations.

The purpose of considering implementation of program evaluation recommendations is to persuade people that the rewards of an evaluation outweigh the reasons for resistance (Armstrong, 1985). Once a decision to change has been reached, an agreement to begin formal implementation requires cooperation from all those affected by the change. Depending on the

CE 051 255 Copy

nature of the innovation, the total time may be less important for implementation than the structure of the change process.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of considering implementation of program evaluation recommendations is to persuade people that the rewards of an evaluation outweigh the reasons for resistance (Armstrong, 1985). The purpose of this study was to identify facilitators and barriers to the implementation of program evaluation recommendations. A secondary purpose of this study was to determine the proportion of recommendations made in each of the nine major areas of the evaluation used for Wisconsin two-year technical college programs, and to identify which areas had recommendations implemented most and least frequently. The nine areas of the evaluation included: (a) general issues; (b) curriculum content; (c) instruction; (d) faculty; (e) counseling and support services; (f) student organizations; (g) advisory committee; (h) facilities, equipment and resources; and, (i) other. The research questions for this study included:

1. What was the proportion of program evaluation recommendations identified in each of the nine major areas that were part of the program evaluation?
2. What recommendations were implemented most and least frequently in each of the nine areas?
3. What factors facilitate implementation of program evaluation recommendations?
4. What factors are barriers to the implementation of program evaluation recommendations?

## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework developed for this study stems from change theory, as applied to evaluation and the effects on implementation. Utilizing Roberts-Gray's (1985) Systems Model of the Implementation Phase of Innovation and Planned Change and Armstrong's (1985) Implementation Strategies, a model was developed, entitled "Stages and Factors in the Implementation of Recommendations" (Ruhland, 1990). Implementation of recommendations occurs in three stages. The first stage of implementation is the development of a plan or

**orientation.** The individual or group within the organization identifies benefits of implementing the recommendation.

The second stage of implementation is a fair trial or **initiation.** At this stage, the individual(s) affected by the recommendation, evaluate the demands and benefits of implementing the recommendation. Consideration is given to integrating the recommendation into a routine practice. The third stage of implementation is a refreezing period during which the recommendation is integrated into a routine practice or **integration.** Routine describes the survival of the recommendation. Individuals within the district have agreed to implement the recommendation. Change will occur, and what was once considered "non-traditional" becomes the new tradition.

The stages and factors to implementation in this model can be used to help ensure that recommendations are implemented following a program evaluation. Six major categories of implementation factors that facilitate and act as barriers to the full use of a recommendation are identified in the model. These

factors include: (a) assistance, (b) communication, (c) power, (d) reinforcement, (e) testing, and (f) training.

## Methods

### Subjects

The population for this study consisted of district directors, deans of instructional services, curriculum coordinators, department deans and instructors from 16 Wisconsin Technical Colleges. The program selected for this study was the Associate Degree Marketing program. Using nonprobability sampling, the sample for this study was selected using established criteria.

The sample of district participants consisted of four district directors, two deans of instructional services, one curriculum administrator, one marketing coordinator, four department deans and four marketing instructors. The sample size represented four of the 16 Wisconsin Technical Colleges.

### Design and Procedures

Completed program evaluation documents were analyzed to identify specific recommendations, by district, for each area that was part of the program

evaluation. Analysis of the completed program evaluation documents obtained from the four districts provided the number of recommendations identified in each of these nine major areas.

The interview was the second method used to obtain data for research questions number two, three, and four. A semi-structured interview format, guided by a list of questions developed by the researcher, was used to collect data. After identifying the stage of implementation for each district's recommendation, participants were asked to identify facilitators and barriers that assisted or hindered the implementation process. By using this interview format, the researcher was able to probe for additional information after the participants identified facilitators and barriers.

Data analysis for the four research questions came from reviewing the program evaluation document and transcripts of conversations from the interviews. Findings for research question number one were obtained by analyzing the program evaluation document from each district. From the documents, the recommendations in

each area were totaled by individual district and as a total number of recommendations from the four districts.

Findings for research questions two, three, and four were obtained by conducting interviews with the participants on-site at each district. Analyzing data from the interviews consisted of cross-tabulating the data from the stage of implementation and facilitators and barriers identified for the recommendations. Further analysis of data obtained from the interviews was completed by means of counting, noting patterns and themes, and clustering tactics. These tactics are designed to assist in the reduction of qualitative data to a manageable size.

**Results**

The majority of recommendations related to research question one were identified as being in the instruction area. The total recommendations by frequency of response for each of the nine major areas for the four districts combined were identified in the following order:

1. Instruction - 31.8%
2. Counseling and support services - 22.4%

3. Faculty - 14.0%
4. Facilities, equipment and resources - 13.1%
5. Curriculum content - 7.5%
6. Advisory committee and Other - 3.7% each
7. Student organizations - 2.8%
8. General issues - .9%

---

Insert Table 1

---

Six of the nine areas from the four districts had the majority of recommendations identified at stage three, integration or implemented. The six major areas with the majority of recommendations implemented included faculty (48.3%); counseling and support services (35.4%); student organizations (50.0%); advisory committee (68.8%); facilities, equipment and resources (55.4%); and other (75.0%). The general issues area had participants identifying the majority of recommendations in stage two, initiation (50.0%). Stage six, not sure was identified most frequently for curriculum content (34.4%) and instruction (26.5%).

---

Insert Table 2

---

The facilitator identified most frequently for each evaluation area included: (a) curriculum content--direct supervisor support; (b) instruction--direct supervisor support; (c) faculty--direct supervisor support; (d) counseling and support services--support from program instructors; (e) student organization--direct supervisor support; (f) advisory committee--direct supervisor support; (g) facilities, equipment and resources--direct supervisor support; and (h) other--district leadership. The majority of these facilitators listed were categorized under the implementation factor category of power.

---

Insert Figure 1

---

The barrier identified most frequently for each evaluation area included: (a) general issues--lack of staff time to implement; (b) curriculum content--lack of staff time to implement; (c) instruction--lack of

staff time to implement; (d) faculty--lack of staff time to implement; (e) counseling and support services--lack of staff time to implement; (f) student organizations--budget; (g) advisory committee--communication, supervisor constraints, technical problems and too late in the year for implementation; (h) facilities, equipment and resources--budget; and (i) other--supervisor constraints and State Board of Vocational, Technical and Adult Education (VTAE) guidelines. The majority of barriers listed were categorized under the implementation factor category of assistance.

---

Insert Figure 2

---

**Conclusions**

1. The model developed in this study supports the initial three stages of implementation developed by Roberts-Gray (1985), Lewin (1947) and Armstrong (1985). The model further supports the stages of implementation identified by Armstrong as orientation, initiation and integration.

2. The six implementation factor categories identified by Roberts-Gray (1985) and Armstrong (1985) are supported by this study. The facilitators and barriers obtained from participants were successfully categorized under one of the six implementation factor categories.
3. The conclusions of Fullan and Pomfret (1977) that implementation requires time, personal interaction, in-service training and other people based support are encouraged.
4. All four districts identified the nine major areas that were part of their program evaluation process. It appears these areas are important enough for districts to include in their program evaluation.
5. The facilitator receiving the majority of responses was direct supervisor support. Supervisors should continue to support the implementation of program evaluation recommendations.

**Implications**

With the increased emphasis in higher education today on implementation, a model to identify the stages

of implementation and categories to list facilitators and barriers will assist with the implementation of program evaluation recommendations. While many technical colleges may be using their own method to implement recommendations, the importance to understanding implementation and why recommendations should be implemented is imperative.

Educators need to realize that recommendations identified at the orientation or initiation stage are moving toward implementation or integration. These recommendations may take longer than one year to fully implement. It is important to recognize that not all recommendations are meritorious to the program. Therefore, decision makers, after considering the recommendation, may consider it not feasible to implement at this time. The recommendations under any of the nine areas evaluated may have little or no value to the program.

Educators must also understand that there are facilitators and barriers that affect implementation. Recognizing these facilitators and barriers can allow individuals to support the facilitators, or work to change the barriers, allowing implementation to occur.

In summary, educators need to further their understanding of implementation and its role with program evaluation. Understanding the importance and process of implementation will provide the knowledge needed to keep postsecondary programs current.

**Recommendations**

1. Further research be conducted between the relationship of change theory and implementation. Does understanding the change process assist with implementation? Does recognizing the three phase change process (Lewin, 1947) unfreezing, moving, and refreezing support the implementation of recommendations?
2. Additional research be conducted to further verify the six major implementation factor categories identified by Roberts-Gray (1985) and Armstrong (1985). Subsequent research will assist in identifying other categories of facilitators and barriers.
3. Staff time be given to assist with the implementation of recommendations. This could be

done by providing release time for the teacher during the semester following the program evaluation.

4. The research format used in this study be used with other vocational program areas to see if program evaluation recommendations are implemented, and other facilitators and barriers identified.

5. Those persons involved in the planning of the evaluation, as well as those who will be interviewed as part of the program evaluation, be involved in the evaluation process from the beginning. Individuals who understand the purpose of the program evaluation and the importance of implementing recommendations, will be less likely to resist change.

**REFERENCES**

Armstrong, A.F. (1985). Strategies for improving evaluation implementation. Toronto, Canada: Canadian Evaluation Society, Evaluation Network and Evaluation Research Society. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 269 435)

Conrad, C.F., & Wilson, R.F. (1985). Academic program reviews: Institutional approaches, expectations, & controversies. (ASHE-ERIC Higher Education Department, Report No. 5). Washington, D.C.: Association for the Study of Higher Education. (ERIC Document Reproduction Services No. ED 264 806)

Cook, D. (1988, February/March). A design for program evaluation. Thrust, pp. 4-43.

Fullan, M. (1983). Evaluating program implementation: What can be learned from follow through. Curriculum Inquiry, 13(2), 215-227.

Fullan, M, & Pomfret, A. (1977). Research on curriculum and instruction implementation. Review of Educational Research, 47(2), 335-397.

Kritek, W.J. (1976). Lessons from the literature on implementation. Educational Administration Quarterly, 12, 86-102.

Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in group dynamics. Human Relations, 1, 5-41.

Roberts-Gray, C. (1985). Managing the implementation of innovations. Evaluation and Program Planning, 8, 261-269.

Roberts-Gray, C., Buller, A., & Sparkman, A. (1987). Linking data with action, procedures for developing recommendations. Evaluation Review, 2(5), 678-684.

Roe, E., & McDonald, R. (1984). Informed professional judgement: A guide to evaluation in postsecondary education. St. Lucia, Queensland, Australia: University of Queensland Press.

Ruhland, S.K. (1990). The implementation of program evaluation recommendations in Wisconsin technical colleges. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Wisconsin-Madison, Madison. (University Microfilms No. 9024786, 1208)

Siegel, K., & Tuckel, P. (1985). The utilization of evaluation research: A case analysis. Evaluation Review, 9(3), 307-328.

Table 1

Recommendations for Each Evaluation Area

| Evaluation Areas | DISTRICT A No. | A % | B No. | B % | C No. | C % | D No. | D % | Total No. | Total % |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. General Issues | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 4.5 | 1 | .9 |
| B. Curriculum Content | 2 | 5.5 | - | - | 3 | 16.7 | 3 | 13.6 | 8 | 7.5 |
| C. Instruction | 11 | 30.5 | 14 | 45.2 | 4 | 22.2 | 5 | 22.7 | 34 | 31.8 |
| D. Faculty | 8 | 22.2 | 6 | 19.3 | - | - | 1 | 4.5 | 15 | 14.0 |
| E. Counseling & Support Services | 4 | 11.1 | 8 | 25.8 | 6 | 33.3 | 6 | 27.3 | 24 | 22.4 |
| F. Student Organizations | 1 | 2.8 | 1 | 3.2 | - | - | 1 | 4.5 | 3 | 2.8 |
| G. Advisory Committee | - | - | - | - | 3 | 16.7 | 1 | 4.5 | 4 | 3.7 |
| H. Facilities, Equipment and Resources | 6 | 16.7 | 2 | 6.5 | 2 | 11.1 | 4 | 18.2 | 14 | 13.1 |
| I. Other | 4 | 11.1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 4 | 3.7 |
| Total | 36 | 99.9 | 31 | 100.0 | 18 | 100.0 | 22 | 99.8 | 107 | 99.9 |

Note: May not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

Table 2.

Percent of Evaluation Recommendation at Each Stage of Implementation

| | STAGES OF IMPLEMENTATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Stage one Orientate | | Stage two Initiate | | Stage three Integrate | | Stage four Consider | | Stage five Other | | Stage six Not sure | | Total | |
| Evaluation component | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % | No. | % |
| General issues | 1 | 25.0 | 2 | 50.0 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 25.0 | 4 | 100.0 |
| Curriculum content | 4 | 12.5 | 7 | 21.9 | 9 | 28.1 | 1 | 3.1 | - | - | 11 | 34.4 | 32 | 100.0 |
| Instruction | 16 | 11.8 | 34 | 25.0 | 28 | 20.6 | 20 | 14.7 | 2 | 1.5 | 36 | 26.5 | 136 | 100.1 |
| Faculty | 7 | 11.7 | 10 | 16.7 | 29 | 48.3 | 5 | 8.3 | 1 | 1.7 | 8 | 13.3 | 60 | 100.0 |
| Counseling & support services | 10 | 10.4 | 23 | 24.0 | 34 | 35.4 | 10 | 10.4 | 3 | 3.1 | 16 | 16.7 | 96 | 100.0 |
| Student organizations | 1 | 8.3 | 4 | 33.3 | 6 | 50.0 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 8.3 | 12 | 99.9 |
| Advisory committee | 1 | 6.3 | 3 | 18.8 | 11 | 68.8 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 6.3 | 16 | 100.2 |
| Facilities, equipment and resources | 1 | 1.8 | 12 | 21.4 | 31 | 55.4 | 1 | 1.8 | 1 | 1.8 | 10 | 17.9 | 56 | 100.1 |
| Other | 1 | 6.3 | 2 | 12.5 | 12 | 75.0 | - | - | - | - | 1 | 6.3 | 16 | 100.1 |

Note. May not equal 100 percent because of rounding.

| ASSISTANCE | COMMUNICATION | POWER |
|---|---|---|
| Availability of equipment<br>Budget<br>Facilities<br>In-house newspaper<br>Resources available<br>Textbook change | Communication was ongoing<br>Favorable student reaction<br>Proper student advising | Direct supervisor support<br>District board support<br>District leadership<br>Endorsement<br>State VTAE support<br>Support from student services<br>Support from director of learning resource center<br>Support from instructional services |
| **REINFORCEMENT** | **TESTING** | **TRAINING** |
| Advisory committee<br>Curriculum committee<br>Participation by all individuals<br>Support from program instructors | Change was necessary<br>Curriculum/course changes<br>Flexibility<br>Improvement was necessary | Conferences/workshop<br>Staff development was available |

Figure 1. Implementation facilitators

| ASSISTANCE | COMMUNICATION | POWER |
|---|---|---|
| Budget<br>Course prerequisite<br>Facilities<br>Lack of equipment<br>Lack of staff time to implement<br>Limited business representation in area<br>Location | Adverse student reaction<br>Communication<br>Processing/reporting too slow | Lack of district board support<br>Lack of support from dean of instructional services<br>Lack of support from district director<br>Lack of support from program supervisor<br>Lack of support from task force<br>Local district guidelines<br>State VTAE guidelines<br>Supervisor constraints<br>Union contract |
| **REINFORCEMENT** | **TESTING** | **TRAINING** |
| Lack of support from program instructors<br>Lack of support from advisory committee<br>Lack of support general education/ coordinator and staff<br>Recommendation not seen feasible at this time<br>Student initiated<br>Student responsibility<br>Student's lack of interest<br>Waiting state marketing task force action | Flexibility in scheduling courses<br>Other priorities in the district<br>Problems with report/data<br>Resistance to change<br>Technical problems<br>Too late in the year for implementation | Inadequate training<br>Limited staff development |

Figure 2. Implementation barriers